



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation** *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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### **Upstate Former Healthcare Employee Sentenced to Prison for Role in Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Scheme** *Stole Patients' Personal Identification Information*

A Montgomery, Alabama woman was sentenced today to 26 months in prison for her involvement in a stolen identity refund fraud scheme, announced Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciruolo, head of the Justice Department's Tax Division, and U.S. Attorney George L. Beck Jr. of the Middle District of Alabama.

According to court documents, Alana Wells worked at a healthcare company where she had access to patient information protected from disclosure under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. Wells admitted that she stole the names, dates of birth and social security numbers of patients from her employer's database and provided these identities to co-conspirator Fredrick Hill. Hill then provided the stolen personal identification information to another co-conspirator, Christopher Davis, who, along with others, used the information to file fraudulent federal tax returns seeking refunds with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Wells pleaded guilty in July 2016 to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and identity theft and to one count of aggravated identity theft. In addition to the term of prison imposed, Wells was ordered to serve three years of supervised release and to pay restitution to the IRS in the amount of \$225,081.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Ciruolo and U.S. Attorney Beck commended special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and Trial Attorneys Jason H. Poole and Kathryn A. Kimball of the Tax Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan S. Ross of the Middle District of Alabama, who are prosecuting this case.

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